

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

After entry of the foregoing amendment, Claims 1-36 are pending in the present application. The present amendment amends Claims 1-27; and adds new Claims 28-36. No new matter is added. Support the amendments is self-evident from the originally-filed claims.

In the outstanding Office Action, the drawings were objected to; the specification was objected to; Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15, 16, 19, 20, 24, and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,583,644 to Sasanuma et al. ("Sasanuma '644"); Claims 3, 12, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as unpatentable over Sasanuma '644 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,367,992 to Aruga et al. ("Aruga"); Claims 4, 13, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as unpatentable over Sasanuma '644 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,797,061 to Overall et al. ("Overall"); Claims 5, 14, and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as unpatentable over Sasanuma '644 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,618,162 to Wiklof et al. ("Wiklof"); Claims 8, 17, and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as unpatentable over Sasanuma '644 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,076,915 to Gast et al. ("Gast") and JP 11-070701 to Watabe; Claims 9, 18, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as unpatentable over Sasanuma '644 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,258,783 to Sasanuma et al. ("Sasanuma '783").

Regarding the objection to the drawings, Figure 1 is amended in view of the Examiner's comments. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

Regarding the objection to the specification, the specification is amended in view of the Examiner's comments. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

Addressing now the rejections of all claims under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103 as anticipated by or unpatentable over Sasanuma '644, summarized above, those rejections are respectfully traversed.

Though they are different in scope, each of the independent recite structure, code, or steps that “[select] a dot size of a reference tone pattern by varying a number of pixels forming each dot”.

By way of background, a pixel is the smallest unit controlled by an image formation device. Due to various factors, the actual size of a pixel formed on a medium may be different from the intended size. Consequently, the actual tone of a corresponding image may be different from the intended tone.¹

Some devices use a scanner to perform a tone adjustment correction. For instance, the device of Sasanuma '644 scans an image and outputs a value corresponding to the actual image density. The output value is compared against a look-up table value to thereby determine a difference between the actual and intended image densities. That difference is corrected by adjusting the output level of the image developing laser 103, i.e., **by conforming the actual pixel size to the intended pixel size.**²

On the other hand, the claimed invention corrects tone **by varying the number of image pixels per image dot**. For example, if the image pixels are reduced to less than their intended size (which renders the image lighter than its intended tone), the claimed invention may employ more pixels per dot to account for this deficiency.³ The adjustment reduces the impact of pixel size error on the intended tone of an image. As the adjustment does not reduce the pixel size error, the adjustment does not require scanning of an image to determine the difference between the actual and intended pixel size.

¹ Applicant's specification, page 4, lines 5-12.

² Sasanuma, col. 4, lines 10-27; and col. 5, line 63 – col. 6, line 30.

³ Applicant's specification, page 18, line 16 – page 19, line 2.

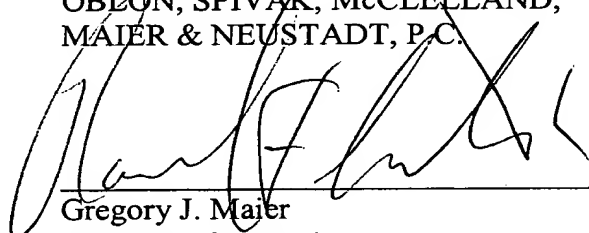
Accordingly, in view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of all claims under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103 as anticipated by or unpatentable over Sasanuma '644 be withdrawn.

New Claims 28-36 are added to claim the present invention in a more varied scope. Claims 28-30, which depend from independent Claims 1, 10, and 19, respectively, further recite "means for determining one of the tone adjusting patterns matching the reference tone pattern".⁴ Independent Claims 31, 33, and 35 recite means-plus-function features, steps, and steps-plus-function features, respectively. Claims 32, 34, and 36, which depend from Claims 31, 33, and 35, respectively, recite "[means/steps] for determining one of the tone adjusting patterns matching the reference tone pattern".

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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⁴ Applicant's specification, page 16, line 8 – page 17, line 23.

IN THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figure 1. This sheet, which includes Figures 1 and 2, replaces the original sheet including Figures 1 and 2.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet (1)